

ABSTRACT

The present invention describes methods for introducing nucleic acids into a target cell using a transition metal enhancer. A mixture containing nucleic acid and a transition metal enhancer is exposed to cells. The nucleic acid is taken up into the interior of the cell with the aid of the transition metal enhancer. Since nucleic acids can encode a gene, the method can be used to replace a missing or defective gene in the cell. The method can also be used to deliver exogenous nucleic acids operatively coding for proteins that are secreted or released from target cells, thus resulting in a desired biological effect outside the cell.

Alternatively, the methods of the present invention can be used to deliver exogenous nucleic acids into a target cell that are capable of regulating the expression of a predetermined endogenous gene. This can be accomplished by encoding the predetermined endogenous gene on the nucleic acid or by encoding the nucleic acid with a sequence that is the Watson-Crick complement of the mRNA corresponding to the endogenous gene.